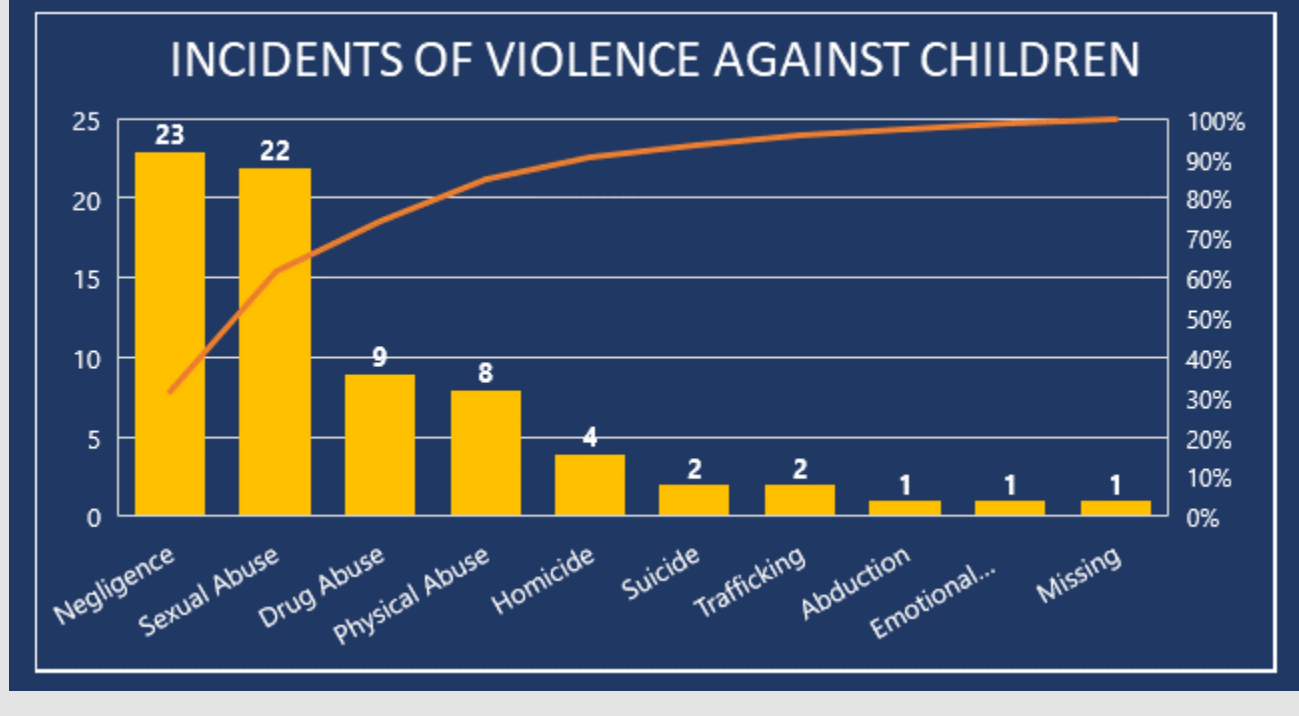


Violence Against Children Reported in the Media for April 2024

PEaCE/ECPAT Sri Lanka continues its monthly newsletters, having our dedicated Media Monitoring team document incidents of child abuse and neglect reported across various media platforms. As per usual, we have compiled extensive data for our readers' awareness for April and are utilising our newly expanded classifications, aligning with UNICEF's International Classification of Violence against Children (ICVAC) standards.

Type of Child Abuse Incidents

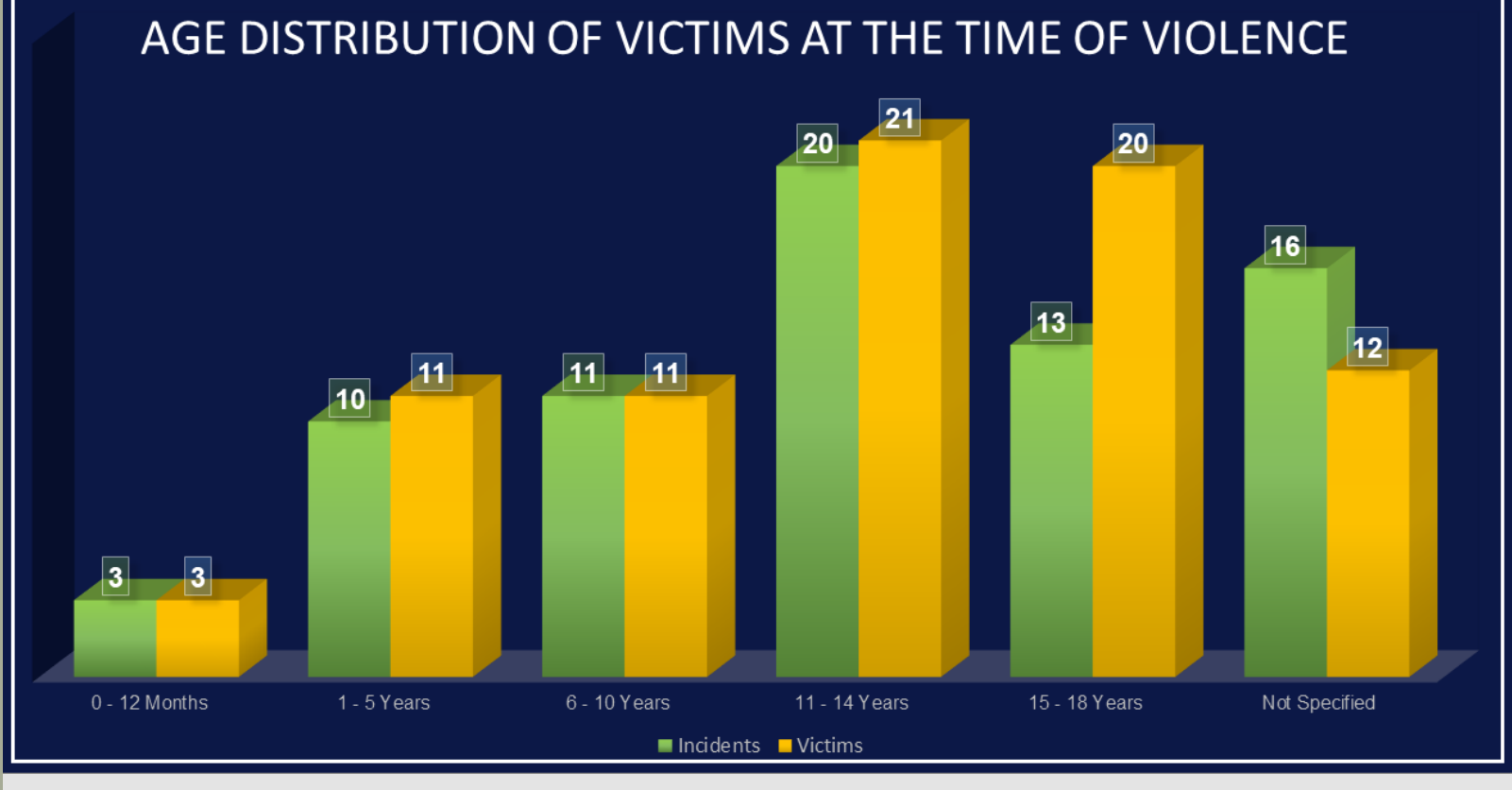


Out of the 75 incidents reported in mainstream media, 32 cases, constituting 42% of the total, involved 33 female victims. Meanwhile, 29 incidents, representing 39% of the total, affected 39 male victims. Notably, 14 incidents, making up 19% of the total, did not specify the gender of the victims, though this has impacted six victims. In terms of overall incidents, 50% were recorded as affecting male victims, and 42% as affecting female victims. This data underscores the distribution and impact of incidents among different genders, with a significant portion of cases lacking specified gender information. Additionally, there were 9 reports involving groups of male victims, contrasting with one incident involving a group of female victims. From the total, it has been, therefore, determined that 8% of the victims' genders were unspecified.

GENDER OF THE VICTIMS

- 32 incidents involving female children, resulting in 33 victims or 42% of the total number of victims.
- There were 29 incidents resulting in 39 male victims, representing 50% of the total victims.
- In 14 incidents, the gender was not specified. This accounts for 8% of the total victims.

An analysis of victim demographics in these tragic events revealed significant trends across age groups. The 11-14 age range suffered the most, with 21 victims (nearly 27% of the total), followed by 15-18-year-olds with 20 victims (25.6%). Infants aged 12 months or below were least affected, with three victims reported. Children aged 1-5 and 6-10 experienced 10 and 11 incidents respectively, each constituting 14% of the total. Unfortunately, the ages of 12 victims from 16 incidents were unspecified, comprising 15.3% of the total count.



Perpetrator trends analysis reveals four distinct categories: group, individual, self-inflicted, and unknown. Group incidents, totalling 24, resulted in 26 victims, constituting 33.3% of the total. Individual actions, notably in child abuse cases, yielded 45 victims from 44 incidents, comprising 60% of reported cases and 57.6% of the victims. Three incidents were perpetrated by unknown parties but amounted to 5 victims. Additionally, two self-inflicted incidents were reported with two victims. Child abuse cases frequently involve perpetrators including parents, stepparents, or siblings. This familial dynamic complicates detection and intervention efforts, as victims may struggle to disclose abuse due to trust issues and familial pressure. Consequently, it is unsurprising that this figure continues to dominate media content concerning these stories.

PERPETRATORS TRENDS

Category	Incidents	Victims
Group	24	26
Individual	44	45
Self	02	02
Unknown	03	05

In the analysed data, family members were the predominant perpetrators, with 27 incidents reported, victimising 34 children (43.5% of all victims). Perpetrators categorized as 'Other' accounted for 17 incidents, affecting 11 children (23% of incidents). Unknown parties were responsible for 11 incidents, harming 16 children (20.5% of the total). Incidents involving intimate partners totalled 7, impacting 7 children. Perpetrators with formal authority were involved in 8 incidents, affecting 6 victims (7.69% of the total). Other categories included clergy members, non-family household members, peers or schoolmates, and self-inflicted harm. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing targeted interventions to protect vulnerable children from abuse.

PERPETRATORS SPECIFIC CLASSIFICATION

- Clergy:** 1 clergy has been implicated in one incident involving 2 victims.
- Family Member:** 27 family members caused 34 victims.
- Intimate Partner:** 7 intimate partners were responsible for 7 victims.
- Person with Formal Authority:** 8 individuals with formal authority are responsible for 6 victims.
- Self:** 2 children are responsible for their own situation.
- Other:** Other perpetrators were responsible for 17 incidents involving 11 victims.
- Unknown:** 11 incidents caused by unknown individuals affected 16 victims.

Settings Where the Violence Occurred

The analysis of settings where crimes against children occurred reveals that most incidents took place in the victim's home. Specifically, 27 incidents resulted in 34 victims, accounting for 43.5% of the total. Community settings were the next most common, comprising 35.9% of cases and affecting 28 victims from 28 incidents. Other notable settings included digital spaces and platforms, educational or vocational training facilities, the perpetrator's home, a third party's home, medical and rehabilitation facilities, places of detention, and other unspecified locations. Incidents occurring in the perpetrator's home accounted for 5.13% of victims, with 3 incidents affecting 4 victims.

SETTINGS WHERE THE VIOLENCE OCCURRED

Criteria	No of Incidents	Percentage	No of Victims	Percentage
Community	28	38.4%	28	36.0%
Digital Space and Platforms	01	1.4%	01	1.3%
Education or Vocational Training Facility	05	6.9%	04	5.1%
Home of the victim	27	37.0%	34	44.0%
Home of the Perpetrator	03	4.1%	04	5.1%
Home of a Third Party	03	4.1%	03	4.0%
Medical, Rehabilitation and Care Facility	03	4.1%	02	2.3%
Other	02	3.0%	01	1.3%
Unknown	01	1.4%	01	1.3%

District-wise Incidents and Victims

When considering the districts most affected by and reported the highest number of victims and incidents, Monaragala emerged at the top. This district reported 9 victims from eight separate incidents, constituting 11.54% of the total incidents and 10.9% of total incidents. Following closely was Badulla, with eight victims resulting from four incidents, making up 10.13% of the total number of victims. Polonnaruwa also reported a significant number, with 6 victims from six separate incidents, accounting for 7.59% of the total number of victims. According to news reported during April, Kandy district reported 6 victims from 4 incidents, making up 7.59% of the total number of victims.

District	Incident	Victims
Ampara	1	1
Anuradhapura	2	2
Badulla	4	8
Batticaloa	2	2
Colombo	5	5
Galle	4	4
Gampaha	5	3
Jaffna	1	1
Kalutara	4	4
Kandy	4	6
Kegalle	3	1
Kurunegala	3	3
Matale	2	2
Mataruwa	2	3
Monaragala	8	9
Mullaitivu	2	2
Nuwara Eliya	4	3
Polonnaruwa	6	6
Puttalam	4	5
Ratnapura	2	3
Tellichchalee	3	4
Vavuniya	2	2
Total	73	79

Cases of Child Deaths

Every day brings new stories or incidents where vulnerable children face various forms of abuse, often inflicted by adults or even other young children. These acts of abuse should never happen. It is also heartbreaking when we hear cases where children die as a result of homicide or suicide cases. In instances of homicide, these child victims often breathe their last at the hands of those who are supposed to be their protectors and guardians. While being victimised by a stranger highlights the severe lack of safety and security the child had to endure, raising urgent questions about why more measures are not being implemented to address these issues.

During April, there were 15 accidents reported alone, involving 16 victims who suffered both injuries and deaths. Additionally, when considering the total number of deaths recorded during April, there were 19 deaths resulting from incidents including suicide, homicide, and negligence. These statistics are not just numbers; they represent young lives lost, futures unfulfilled, and families devastated. Implementing community-based surveillance and early intervention programs can help identify and address risks before they escalate. Additionally, fostering collaboration among governmental agencies, NGOs, CSOs, and community organisations can create a comprehensive safety net for vulnerable children. By prioritising these measures, we can all work towards creating a safer environment for all children.